

Introduction to Rhetoric

Aristotle is considered the inventor of modern rhetoric. Aristotle described rhetoric as "the faculty of observing in any given case the means of persuasion." The "means" of persuasion are the rhetorical appeals such as those below. . .

Ethos is using trust and credibility to establish a rapport with. audience

The use of ethos, or an ethical appeal, means a speaker or writer uses the strategy of **appealing to reputation, trust, and credibility**. To the left, it is pictured as a business suit because why else dress up for a job interview? Dressing up for a job interview (always a step above your interviewer) shows respect. It is a visual cue indicating an understanding of the situation (asking for a job) and dressing for success. It states that one is willing to wear something out of the everyday norm that is undoubtedly uncomfortable in order to show a desire to look professional, show attention to detail, and fit in with norms and expectations in a professional environment.

However, moving away from the referent of a business suit, it has other components such as **brand recognition and reputation**. For example, Lance Armstrong lost all of his Nike endorsements, worth \$150 million dollars, for admitting to using PEDs or performance-enhancing-drugs during all seven of his Tour de France cycling championship wins. Nike came to the decision that Armstrong represented cheating and that the former pro-athlete had lost trust with the public; therefore, he was "scrubbed" from Nike's ad campaigns and celebrity endorsements.

Ethos is also a key element in written arguments. Having the ability to use elevated vocabulary and write in clear syntax that is grammatical and spelled correctly shows ethos in writing situations such as writing an essay in college or filling out a job application or resume.

Pathos is using emotion to persuade an audience by pulling at the audience's heartstrings and emotions.

Pathos means the use of **emotion as an element of persuasion**. Here we see an image of a heart. People are unique for our ability to have **empathy, happiness, sadness, and other complex emotions**. The use of emotions in argument varies depending on whether the argument is visual, written, or audio-visual.

In a visual argument, you may as the viewer be exposed to scenes of **crying adults, laughing babies, or wounded warriors**. These are highly connotative images.

In an audio-visual argument, you may see the above images but have those emotions heightened by **sad music** or exciting bass beats depending on the emotion that is being tapped into.

In a written argument, the writer may discuss or illustrate his or her argument with **imagery and highly connotative or emotional words** such as "warrior," "champion," "evil," or "courage." Indeed, John F. Kennedy deployed emotional appeals when he stated in his "Alliance for Progress" speech that "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable," referring to the violent revolutions in Guatemala and Cuba.

Logos is using reasoning and rationale to prove a point and persuade the audience with facts and statistics.

Logical appeals, simply stated, use **sound reasoning**. This appeal is the hardest to make sense out of for the typical person studying rhetoric. Basically, when an author or artist uses lots of **facts and statistics**, he/she/they are trying to win the argument based on logic.

An example of a logical appeal in advertising (or visual arguments) is the use of competitor comparisons. For example, comparing a juicy and fresh-looking name-brand hamburger to a generic competitor's hamburger that is portrayed as dry and old is an appeal using logic, or **comparing and contrasting**. Another example from advertising could be **cost savings**. An ad for pizza might ask you to purchase two pizzas in order to get a discount on the second pizza. The pizza company is trying to appeal to your sense of budgeting and value in order to buy the second pizza for a percentage off the original price.

In written arguments, you can spot appeals to logic when the author lists facts and statistics such as in the examples below.

- In "Letter from Birmingham Jail," Martin Luther King Jr. points to the facts around the 1963 16th Street Baptist Church bombing in Birmingham, Alabama. He draws the reader's attention to the fact that the police and leaders of the city did little to nothing to catch the perpetrators who killed four young girls in the bombing: "There have been more unsolved bombings of Negro homes and churches in Birmingham than in any other city in the nation. **These are the hard, brutal facts of the case** [emphasis added]."
- Stephen Dubner and Steven Levitt argue in their book *Freakonomics* that the passing of Roe vs. Wade, which legalized abortion in the U.S., corresponded to a decline in violent crime in the 1990s and 2000s. Levitt writes, "Studies have shown a reduction in infanticide, teenage drug use, and teenage childbearing consistent with the theory that abortion will reduce other social ills similar to crime." Here they use **cause and effect** to show that the decline in violent crime for young people in the "prime crime age" of 15-19, is related to the higher number of young women who wanted their children and the lower numbers of children who would have suffered neglect and/or abuse due to an overly young or ill-prepared mother.